SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Power of Heads of Departments.

From the N. Y. World.

The *Times* says that General Grant will give the power of minor appointments to those heads of departments who have the responsibility. It is asserted that

"He will not consent to be the dispenser o small patronage. He will not take cognizance of the paltry business of office-hunting or the petty particulars of the departments. He will not give heed to the herd of impudent politicians who, on the plea of service, claim the right to control local appointments. He intends to turn the office-hunting stream from the White House, and to purify the manner of making appointments by leaving the heads of departments to scrutinize applications and make the recommendations on which he will act."

Such a line of action will be in accordance with the law, which already confers on the heads of the departments the power to appoint all clerks, and on the Postmaster-General the authority to appoint all postmasters whose commissions are less than one thousand dollars. The statute impliedly excludes the President from interference in such matters. President Grant will really have nothing to do with the appointment of custom-house clerks, inspectors, weighers, and gaugers, who are nominated by the collector of the district and confirmed by the Secretary of the Treasury. If he does meddle with such things, he goes out of the path of law and official dignity.

But while the statute says these minor officers shall be appointed by the heads of departments, it is equally explicit in saying that certain other officers shall be appointed by the President. What will Grant do about that class? The *Times* intimates he will leave the heads of departments to scrutinize applications and recommend to him the proper person. He, says the *Times*, "will make *their* selection of subordinates, from heads of bureaus downwards, a duty the consequences of which they cannot hope to evade. They will have the power they should have to insure efficiency, and the public will know to whom censure belongs if the working of the departments be not as it ought to be."

That disposes of heads of bureaus, and, in our opinion, disposes of the matter wisely. Then come collectors of internal and external revenue. Will the President permit those offices to be bestowed by the Secretary of the Treasury? There is no good reason why the Treasury Department should not wield those commissions as well as the heads of the bureaus wherein, according to the *Times*, the Secretary is to make the recommendations on which the President is to act.

Will the leaders, the McClures of the Republican party, consent to put such a vast power in the hands of the new Secretary of the Treasury, even if the Senate consents to take off its iron hand by repeal of the Tenure-of-Office law? Will General Grant so abdicate control over patronage thus early? We doubt.

Grant's Administration—The New Era.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The country takes a new departure in political life under the lead of General Grant. The changes made in the Constitution by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments, and which it is proposed to rivet upon our political system by the fifteenth amendment, declaring that the right of the citizen to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race or color, make for us a new constitution which supplants the old one. We have now four races—the white, the original red, the black, and the yellow—on the great platform of American progress. To make the thing complete we have only to add another color to our flag. This is the accomplishment of a great revolution in our theory of government, under which State rights have disappeared and State lines are rendered inoperative. We have consolidated in one great empire, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and which will extend from the North Pole to the Equator. It will be the greatest empire the world has ever known; for even now, in its infancy, it surpasses in geographical extent, in mental activity, in material enterprise, all that Rome ever attempted or dreamed.

A retrospect of the past fifty years of our progress throws a vivid light upon the growth and the causes of the overthrow of the political theories which have passed away. Under the shield of State rights the institution of slavery grew to immense proportions as a social system within the Union. As the leading representative of the two—the political and the social theory—Calhoun fills a large space in that period. But his social theories carried our institutions back to the period of the middle ages, with its serfs and its feudal lords. This was the fight Calhoun made and lost. He had none of the great agents of modern civilization with him. The rail, the telegraph, and the modern press were all inaugurated during his time, and these subtle influences, planted by Stephenson, Morse, and the *Herald*, were all opposed to the Calhoun idea. The result was that he lost ground while we went ahead.

The contest is now ended. A new era commences with a population that may be practically estimated at any figure between one hundred millions and five hundred millions of people, marching shoulder to shoulder under a system of political consolidation on the broad path of empire. Their arms are the steam engine, the electric telegraph, and the independent press, and the victories they will achieve are beyond the wildest dreams of human thought to-day. The last generation compassed progress from the slow coach to the rapid car, from the uncertain sail to the certain paddlewheel, and has served its apprenticeship with the electric battery. Whoever believes that we stop here deceives himself as greatly as did Calhoun when he believed he could carry our social and political system back to the feudal age.

A Significant Resolution in Congress.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The resolution upon Spain and Cuba which unanimously passed the House of Representatives on Tuesday has something of the true republican ring about it. The sting which it contains referring to the liberties of Spain is an admirable prelude to the sympathy expressed for Cuban patriots in the last half of the resolution. The further resolution authorizing the President to recognize the independence of Cuba at the proper moment is what we have been advocating for two months past. The Cubans are bent upon obtaining their independence, and there is no doubt but they will succeed much quicker than the Spanish leeches may imagine. The sympathy expressed by General Grant in his conversation with General Reynolds is very opportune, and coming on the same day with the House resolution, shows how strong the current is setting in favor of Cuba.

It is evident that the happy moment is approaching when we shall commence at the right end of the national reconstruction problem by straightening up our foreign matters. We must repay Spain for her kindness to us during our struggle for national existence. We can do this, and at the same moment perform a great moral obligation in behalf of the Cubans who are suffering from Spanish domination. As regards England, our little reciprocity understanding with Prince Edward Island is destined to open the true road to the settlement of the Alabama claims.

Spain, struggling for liberalism, certainly cannot object to the liberal movement of Cuba if she be consistent with her own newly adopted code of progress. Therefore the best thing for the Spanish Government to do is to telegraph to General Dulce to withdraw from Cuba and save the lives of the twelve or fifteen thousand Spanish troops who are now dying off like sheep under the combined influences of cholera, yellow fever, and patriot bayonets. Quick action should be taken on this subject by both Spain and the United States. Cuba is too closely allied with us in a common progress for us to allow Spain to hold possession of the island simply for the purpose of desolating it.

The New President.

From the N. Y. Times.

President Grant begins his new career under favorable auspices. Seldom, after so heated a contest as that which resulted in his election, have all parties so promptly acquiesced in the decision of the nation, or felt so general a confidence in an untried President. Even the *World*, whose intense partisanship during the canvass, not pausing at the respect due to private character, indulged in the bitterest personal vilification, now declares, "We are constrained to say at least this in General Grant's favor, that he is a growing man, and evinces a rare capacity to improve by experience." As a whole, the country looks to his administration with a general confidence unprecedented, we venture to say, for at least thirty years; and the general disappointment in the career of his predecessor only throws his own prospects, by contrast, into stronger light.

Undoubtedly this general acquiescence and confidence are based on faith in General Grant's personal character, talents, and temperament, as being especially suited to his high place. His well-known firmness of will, tempered by moderation in judgment; his pertinacity, of a sort which is not the offspring of rashness or ill-blood; his promptness of action after candor and deliberation of thought—in brief, his leading personal characteristics are generally conceived to be precisely those which joined with the honesty, unflinching integrity, and patriotism he is known to possess, are required in his new position. Chancellor Kent says, in speaking of the President as it was designed he should be, "It is not for him to deliberate or decide upon the wisdom or expediency of the law; what has once been declared to be law under all the cautious forms of deliberation prescribed by the Constitution, ought to receive prompt obedience. The characteristical qualities required in the Executive Department are promptitude, decision and force."

True it is that, in the excited canvass of last year, it was the fashion to decry Grant as being by instinct and profession a soldier, and to represent (despite the fresh experience of Tyler, Pierce, and Buchanan) that a man versed in politics was the only fit person for the Chief Magistracy of the nation. Had General Hancock been Grant's opponent, this much-elaborated argument, it is safe to say, would never have been heard of; and, as it was, it ignored the fact that the popular will had long decided otherwise—Grant being the fifth successful soldier who has been elected to the Presidency, and his predecessors bearing names so honored in history and in popular affection and respect as those of Washington, Jackson, Harrison, and Taylor.

And it is a sign of hope and promise of support for the new administration that, since the November election, the "campaign" objections to General Grant have been forgotten. When even the *World* admits that it is prepared to find him "upon the whole a tolerably satisfactory President," it is a significant token of the general support which the best men of all parties are willing to give to the new administration. We profoundly believe that it will prove worthy of such support.

The Retirement of Mr. Wade.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The retirement of Mr. Wade from public life leaves Mr. Sumner the "Father of the Senate." It is rarely this honor falls upon so young a man. Mr. Sumner entered the Senate at an early age, and has served continuously. General Cameron, of Pennsylvania, might be awarded this honor if we merely took the earliest date of service. He entered the Senate in 1845, while Mr. Sumner was elected in 1851. He has therefore only served ten years in that body, having resigned to go into Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet before the close of his second term. Mr. Sumner now enters upon his fourth term, and if he should live till its expiration he will have given Massachusetts a quarter century of Senatorial labor.

When the Thirty-second Congress assembled, on the 1st of December, 1851, five new Senators took the oath of office—Mr. Fish, of New York, Mr. Geyer, of Missouri, and Mr. Wade, of Ohio, as Whigs; Mr. James, of Rhode Island, as a Democrat; and Mr. Sumner as a Free-Soiler. His name stands out in odd-looking small capitals, along with those of Salmon P. Chase and John P. Hale, as the only three "Free-Soilers" on the list. Looking back through the eighteen years that have elapsed, it seems a poetic significance that he should have been among the Senatorial pioneers of Republicanism. It was a distinguished Congress in some respects. Henry Clay still represented Kentucky, although death had set its hand upon him. Douglas was there from Illinois, young, fresh, and hopeful. Bayard sat in the seat of his fathers. King represented Alabama. Hamlin, a recalcitrant Democrat, was impatiently waiting to break his chains. Cass and Seward were Senators. In the House were Stephens, and Toombs, and Breckinridge; Andrew Johnson, from Tennessee; Thaddeus Stevens, from Pennsylvania; and Joshua R. Giddings, from Ohio. The parties were singularly divided. There was the great Whig party on the point of disorganization by reason of its cowardice on the slavery question; and the great Democratic party, menaced with its Free Soil secession. Here and there we had a doubtful, timid gentlemen, who didn't know which way to go, and allowed himself to be called a "Unionist." A few such men as Rhett, Hunter, and Butler of South Carolina, boldly avowed their sympathies with treason, and claimed to be "States Rights men." Between Democracy and Whiggery there was nothing but a truce. Their names were scarcely useful as party designations. The only Congressmen really bold in the expression of their convictions, and who foresaw the real question of the future, were the three men who called themselves "Free-Soilers" and the seven Senators who foreshadowed rebellion by their devotion to "States Rights."

Mr. Wade came into the Senate when he was passing the meridian of life. He has given his riper years to the country. He leaves it an old man, upon the verge of that "three score and ten" by which the Psalmist numbers the years of man. He was the representative of the progressive, earnest, radical sentiment of the West, just as Mr. Sumner is the type of the scholarly, philosophical, and cultivated radicalism of the East. He was a modern New England Puritan, strengthened and broadened by the rude experience of Western pioneer life. A native of Massachusetts, like Mr. Sumner, he sought the West when he came to manhood, and for forty years he has been a prominent and dominant leader in Ohio politics! He has that vigor of character with which men love to associate plain and friendly phrases implying strength and tenacity. They call him "bold Ben Wade!" and "bluff Ben Wade!" and "honest old Ben!" seeing in him a true descendant of the men who established New England, and fought for liberty in the early days of the Revolution, and brought to Massachusetts something of the spirit of Cromwell. When the treason of President Johnson led our friends to feel that it might become necessary to seek a successor by the process of impeachment, two Republican Senators were deemed fitted for the office. In calmer times we have little doubt that the Presidency of the Senate would have fallen upon Mr. Fessenden of Maine; but the danger ahead, the necessity of a perfect assurance of fealty to extreme radicalism, our bitter experience with the recreant Johnson, controlled the judgment of a disappointed and troubled party, and led to the selection of Mr. Wade. This compliment shows the real value of the man to the Republican party. He will not be remembered as the President of the Senate. He was not a parliamentarian, nor a logician, nor skilled in refining phrases and construing odd points of law. He was simply "bold and bluff Ben Wade" from first to last. Grave Senators have sometimes been restless under his rude decisions, but they felt that if disaster came, and the safety of the Republican party should rest upon him, as its President, he would be as true as the rocks of his native Massachusetts.

And now that he goes from us, retirement must be welcome to one of his years and labors. We wish him peace and happiness, the rest that must be sweet after so much unrest, the love, the confidence, and the admiration of his people. It will be many years before we have a truer Senator than "old Ben Wade." With characteristic zeal he tells us that upon leaving his position as Senator he will give his best efforts to accomplish the ratification of the suffrage amendment by Ohio. He can crown a life of integrity and honor by no nobler effort. Long may it be before it come to him to pass from his career of noble and intrepid service to the rewards of a higher and purer life.

The Great American Tea-totaller.

From the N. Y. World.

We had feared that the death of slavery would be the death of H. G. Quoth Shylock:—

"You do take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live."

And H. G. having lived politically by the life of slavery, why should he not die with the death of it? Marry, because he will not.

"We do most ardently hope and trust," cries H. G. in the *Tribune*, "now that slavery is dead, to see the tea-plant naturalized and largely grown on the more southern slopes of the Alleghenies." Henceforth, then, we are to admire H. G. in a new character, as the nozzle of the domestic tea-pot of the future. To Greece he cannot give his shining blade—for Greece has melted, like her own name, in the glance of the great powers. But to tea he gives his shining spoon. For immediate results of good to the spinsters and other tea-drinkers generally, H. G. of course neither looks nor cares to look. Let them cease to be cheered by the cheap Chinese herb, and inebriate themselves on the gin within the juniper or the whisky in the corn. The political economy of H. G. is prophetic. "Had Europe," he tells us, "been so enlightened as to spend one hundred millions of dollars in naturalizing the silk culture on the shores of the Mediterranean fifteen to twenty centuries ago, she would thereby have increased her wealth by not less than one thousand millions." It is true that an investment of a hundred dollars to-day, with a prospect of getting a thousand dollars for it some two thousand years hence, may not be thought by the average American man of business a very brilliant operation. But the average American man of business is a fool to H. G., even if the converse be equally true. And so small wits need not expend themselves on futile efforts to prevent H. G. from pressing Congress to impose a prohibitory duty on all foreign teas, and to grant a hundred millions of dollars in gold-bearing bonds to the great American tea company yet to be. But why confine thyself, most excellent philanthropist, to tea?

Ivory is an article of great interest and value in modern commerce. It is now produced in these United States. Our American fellow-citizens of African descent, it is true, do grow a certain supply of the article, but rarely in masses considerable enough to answer the demands of the trade. Why should we not raise our own elephants in our own jungles? We have lots of jungles now in Florida, and, if "reconstruction" goes on long enough, we shall have them in abundance all through the South. By all means, let us have native ivory, even if we have to wait a few hundred years or so for it, going without meanwhile. Also, native mahogany. Is it not a scandal to think that a trooly loil man should ever be forced to extend his legs under a board which was felled in the forests of Honduras by a foreign axe, manufactured, probably, in the hated town which Roebuck represented, and the price of which has gone to swell the profits of the bloated capitalists of Britain? Be not content, H. G., with this or that trivial impossibility, nor limit thine awful energies to the mere raising of a tempest in our teapots. The nation hails thee as the tea totaller of protection, and expects from thee nothing less than the conversion of the blessed sun in heaven into a cucumber-patch!